

Fall 86-87
M 6-10 pm 325 Annie May Swift
Chuck Kleinhans
office: 316 AMS; 491-2255; M 4-6 and by appointment

RADICAL THEORIES OF MASS CULTURE

The course examines some liberal, anarchist, Marxist and other radical theories of mass culture. In addition to studying theoretical statements, the course will deliberately attempt to contrast these theories with creative work that seems to challenge, contradict, or escape from such theoretical perspectives. Figures studied include T. W. Adorno, Imiri Baraka (Leroi Jones), Pierre Bourdieu, Guy de Bord. Issues covered will include blues, subcultures and countercultures, and grand guignol and the grotesque.

Prerequisite: senior or grad standing; open to non-majors.

Required texts: (available at Norris Center store)

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. tr. Richard Nice. Cambridge MA: Harvard U.P., 1984.

Hebdige, Dick. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. London: Methuen, 1979.

de Bord, Guy. *Society of the Spectacle*. Detroit: Black and Red, 1979.

Jones, Leroi. *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*. 1963.

Additional readings will be available at Copy Cat.

Schedule:

22 Sept.
course administration, introduction
lecture: Cold War liberals and the problem of mass culture
film and discussion: *Network* (Lumet, 1976, 120 min. film)

29 Sept.
discussion: Marxism and Mass Culture
readings: Chuck Kleinhans, "Marxism and Mass Culture"
Tabloid collective, "On/Against Mass Culture"
John Hess, "Introduction to Ideology"
Michel Sorkin, review of Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*

discussion: Adorno and the Culture Industry
T. W. Adorno, "The Culture Industry" and "The Culture Industry Revisited."

6 Oct.
discussion: New Definitions of Culture
Alice Walker, "In Search of Our Mother's Gardens"
Elayne Rapping, "Tupperware and Women"
Lucy Lippard, "The Pink Glass Swan," and "Making Something from Nothing"
tape and discussion: *La Maestra* (d. Elinor Boyer and Karen Peugh, video)

discussion: Ownership, Control, and Manipulation Theories
Dallas Smythe, "The Role of the Mass Media and Popular Culture in Defining Development," and "On the Audience Commodity and its Work."
Thomas Guback, review of Smythe

13 Oct.

discussion: Neo-anarchist perspectives.

Guy de Bord, *Society of the Spectacle*.

screening and discussion: *Call It Sleep* (Issac Cronin & Terrel Selzer, video, 42 min.)

selections from Rubin, Hoffman, Crumb, Lynch, Spain, etc.

20 Oct.

discussion: Blues, 1.

Adorno, "Perennial Fashion--Jazz"

Jones, *Blues People*

screening and discussion: *Passing Through* (Larry Clark, 1975, 60 min film.)

27 Oct.

discussion: Blues, 2.

Richard Wright, "Forward" to Oliver, *Blues Fell This Morning*

various artists, blues lyrics

Carl Boggs, review of Paul Garon, *Blues and the Poetic Spirit*

Michelle Russell, "Slave Codes and Linear Notes"

audio and video screening and discussion: selections from Black women singers, past and present

3 Nov.

discussion: Subculture analysis

Hebdige, *Subcultures: The Meaning of Style*.

screening: excerpts from *Rude Boy* (pr. The Clash)

10 Nov.

discussion: Class and culture.

Bourdieu, *Distinction*, to p. 256

screening and discussion: excerpts from current tv

17 Nov.

discussion: Class and culture

Bourdieu, *Distinction*, to end

screening and discussion: excerpts from current tv

24 Nov.

discussion: the grotesque, macabre, splatter, and grand guignol

Mary Mackey, "The Meat Hook Mama, the Nice Girl, and Butch Cassidy in Drag"

Frantisek Deak, "Theatre du Grand Guignol"

Philip Brophy, "Horrority--The Textuality of Contemporary Horror Films"

screening and discussion: *Blood of the Beasts* (Franju) and excerpts from *Friday the 13th*, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Faces of Death*, etc.

1 Dec.

course evaluation and final screening

Screening and discussion: *Ganja and Hess* (Bill Gunn, 1972, c. 90 min.)

Students are expected to do the reading in advance of the class and be prepared to discuss it. Grading will include participation in and quality of contribution to discussion (30%). The following assignments are required.

1. a typed summary of one hour of class notes for distribution to the entire class. We will rotate this secretarial task. The notes are due the following week. (5%)

2. a 2-3 page paper intended to start discussion on one of the readings for class. There will be a sign-up list. You will give the paper orally in class and give two copies to Chuck. More than one person may cover a reading. (10%)

3. Written summaries (two for undergrads, four for grads) for distribution to the entire class of articles or book chapters. A bibliography will be provided. Your summary should provide a descriptive condensation of the reading and also have a conclusion in which you relate the reading to concerns of the course. These are due in class on Oct. 13 and Nov 3 (undergrads) and Oct. 6, 20, Nov. 3 and 17 (grads) (20%)

4. A final paper which may be primarily theoretical or primarily critical but which deals with some of the larger theoretical questions raised in the course and which works them out in terms of one or more cases taken for close analysis. 10-15 pp. typewritten. Due Tues. Dec. 9, 9 am. (35%) .